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ABSTRACT

The photographs of William Henry Jackson taken during the 1871 survey of the Yellowstone region of Wyoming and Montana have often been cited as the first specific group of photographs used for successful persuasion. Many historians credit Jackson's photographs as being the most influential factor in persuading Congress to designate the Yellowstone region as the nation's first national park. But a closer examination of historical reports and congressional accounts shows that these claims are exaggerated. Oral descriptions of the area from unofficial expeditions prior to the survey sounded unbelievable, but were consistent in many ways, thus lending the stories credibility before the Jackson photographs were taken. An article from a prominent newspaper applauding passage of the national park bill made no reference to the Jackson photographs. Jackson himself viewed his role as expedition photographer as supportive rather than primary. Although congressional members received the photographs as part of the Yellowstone lobbying effort, those members most influential in the passage of the bill were more likely persuaded by accounts from family members in previous expeditions than by the photographs. There is little evidence that Jackson's photographs were more influential than the reports and specimens presented to Congress in persuading members to designate the area a park. (HTH)

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A TALL TALE RETOLD

The Influence of the Photographs of William Henry Jackson Upon the Passage of the Yellowstone Park Act of 1872

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Imagine the excitement William Henry Fox-Talbot, an English inventor and country gentleman, must have felt when in August 1835 he succeeded in permanently fixing a fleeting sun-picture. The image is of The Oriel Window in his home at Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire, England. It measures not quite an inch square.

As the world's oldest extant photographic negative it represents the foundation of the negative-positive process in photography. It presents to the world one of the earliest permanently fixed photographic recordings of an object. In a note written to the left side of this paper negative Fox-Talbot wrote "When first made, the squares of glass about 200 in number could be counted, with help of a lens."[1]

Since that magical moment when Fox-Talbot demonstrated the ability of photographic recordings to document the 200 or so glass squares in his window, photography has been used to demonstrate that something exists, that something is lovely, or, perhaps, hideous. From almost the moment of invention some have attempted to use photographs as powerful persuaders.

The very first time a specific body of photographic work apparently was used with stunning effect was in the winter of 1871-72. The photographs were made in the summer and fall of 1871 for the U.S. Geological Survey of the Yellowstone region of Wyoming and Montana. This survey, usually referred to as the Hayden survey was named after the director Dr. Ferdinand V. Hayden, an M.D. and a professor of Geology at the University of Pennsylvania.

The photographs were made by William Henry Jackson, who served as expedition photographer for the Hayden surveys from 1870 through 1879.

Jackson was born in 1843 and lived to the age of ninety-nine. Before joining the U.S. Geological Survey team he operated a portrait studio in Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to his photographs of the Yellowstone region for the government he made other numerous photographs of the American West. In 1877 he produced for the United States Department of the Interior a Descriptive Catalogue of Photographs of North American Indians. This major ethnographic document describes over one thousand photographs in the possession of the government. The intent of the publication according to Jackson was "to systematize the collection of Photographic Portraits of Indians now in the possession of the United States Geological Survey of the Territories, and to place on record all the information we have been able to obtain on the various individuals and scenes represented."[2]

After leaving the government in 1879 he resumed his career as a commercial photographer. Moving first to Denver to set up a studio, he eventually photographed people and places all over the world. Many of his images he sold through commercial firms he was involved with, first in Denver and later in Detroit. The Detroit View Company owned by Jackson sold his scenic pictures as well as those made by other photographers. His reputation had been made as a landscape photographer, yet one of

his large commercial projects was the production of The White City, a folio of views of the Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893-94.

Jackson's magnificent views of Yellowstone's natural wonders are considered by several historians to be the first instance of photographic evidence being used to shape national policy in the United States.

Beaumont Newhall, the United States' most prominent historian of photography wrote in his classic study, The History of Photography:

> The United States Congress was persuaded to set apart the Yellowstone region as a national park by the convincing evidence of William H. Jackson's photographs which had been presented to its members by Ferdinand V. Hayden as documents; they made credible the reports of natural wonders which until then had been dismissed as the tall tales of travellers.[3]

Gail Buckland, in her book, Reality Recorded: Early Documentary Photography wrote:

> Jackson's photographs of the West served to validate the tales that were told of the natural wonders that existed in North America; they greatly impressed the members of the United States Congress -- to the extent that they set apart Yellowstone region as a national park.[4]

Her bibliography lists Newhall as a major source.

Barbara London Upton and John Upton wrote in their text, Photography:

> William Henry Jackson's photographs of Yellowstone helped convince Congress to set the area aside as a National Park...[5]

They acknowledge relying upon Newhall in their preface.

George Craven in his text Object and Image wrote:

> But the best known of all the frontier cameramen was William Henry Jackson, who worked his way west from Omaha and was the official photographer to the Hayden Surveys from 1870 to 1879. The 1871 trek explored the natural wonders of the Yellowstone region, and Jackson's photographs, displayed to the Congress in Washington, were instrumental the next year in creating Yellowstone National Park.[6]

And Peter Pollack, former curator of photography at the Art Institute of Chicago, in his The Picture History of Photography is quite specific in his claim for Jackson's influence. "Nine of his photographs saved Yellowstone for the people of America, making an area 3,578 square miles into the country's first national park."[7]

Perhaps because the statements seem so intuitively correct, none of these historians bothered to footnote their sources. Perhaps because the statements seem correct, they have become accepted as historical truth. For whatever reasons, the perception that Jackson's photographs played an important and perhaps decisive role in gaining the passage of the Yellowstone Park legislation, which formed the basis for the national park system, has become the accepted truth.

Because none of these writers cite sources for their claims, the role Jackson's photographs played in the passage of the Yellowstone legislation needs to be re-examined. Upon what evidence did Newhall and the others rely?

Apparently Newhall relied upon the pioneering work of the chemist and historian Robert Taft. Taft, a native of Kansas and a professor of chemistry at the University of Kansas published

one of the earliest well-documented histories of photography. His work, Photography and the American Scene, covers photography's first fifty years. It is subtitled A Social History 1839-1889. Taft compiled a remarkable amount of data. The book is, however, more an encyclopedia of facts rather than an analytical social treatise. Nevertheless, considering the vacuum in the field in the 1930's it represents, even today, a monument to diligence and to scholarship.

The similarity to the assertions found in Taft's book and in Newhall's is strong. Taft wrote:

> The real value of Jackson's photographs became apparent the following winter [1872], when through the efforts of Hayden and of N. P. Langford and William H. Clagett, a bill was prepared and introduced into both houses of Congress setting aside the Yellowstone as a National Park.
>
> Jackson's photographs were prepared and placed on exhibition and had an immense influence in securing the desired legislation. Senator Pomeroy, of Kansas, who introduced the Senate bill, had some difficulty in getting its consideration. The second time he attempted to bring up the matter in the Senate he remarked, "There are photographs of the valley and the curiosities, which Senators can see." The Senators must have seen them, for the next time the bill came up for consideration it was passed without dissent, and on March 1, 1872, President Grant signed the bill creating the Yellowstone National Park.[8]

After citing Senator Pomeroy's comment duly excised from The Congressional Globe (now known as The Congressional Record) Taft continued to build his case by relying upon the work of an early Superintendent and historian of Yellowstone Park, H. M. Chittenden. Taft continued:

> The value of these photographs in aiding in the passage of this bill is also attested by Chittenden, the historian of the Park, who says, "The photographs were of

> immense value. Description might exaggerate, but the camera told the truth; and in this case the truth was more remarkable than exaggeration...They did a work no other agency could do and doubtless convinced everyone who saw them that the region where such wonders existed should be carefully preserved to the public forever."

Taft's footnotes provide specific sources upon which he based his conclusions. He also includes quotations from two of those sources. As well researched as Taft's book is his conclusions in regard to Jackson's photographs, however, are not supportable.

A careful examination of his text, notes and sources reveals: (1) He strung together sentences from different chapters in Chittenden's book, thereby falsely creating a connection that in the full text is tenuous at best; (2) He quoted Senator Pomeroy out of context; (3) He ascribed the difficulty in getting the Yellowstone Park legislation onto the floor to the fact that the Senators had not been adequately exposed to Jackson's photographs; and (4) He incorrectly implied that because of Jackson's photographs this legislation "passed without dissent."

Taft manipulated the record. His reason, conscious or unconscious, was to substantiate his belief in the power of photographic evidence to persuade. In doing this he created a myth. Newhall as well as other respected writers have perpetuated it.

When examining the effort to persuade the Congress to pass the Yellowstone park legislation, one finds that many people were involved. Jackson's photographs represent but one

kind of data collected. The lobbying effort included many pieces of data and many kinds of activities.

One source claims that four hundred copies of Scribner's Monthly containing an article on Yellowstone by an early explorer, N. P. Langford, were distributed to all members of Congress just preceding the day of the vote.[10] In the February 1872 issue of Scribner's Monthly an article by Professor Hayden, head of the 1871 survey, appeared. It concluded with a specific plea for the establishment of Yellowstone as a national park.

> The intelligent American will one day point on the map to this remarkable district with the conscious pride that it has not its parallel on the face of the globe. Why will not Congress at once pass a law setting it apart as a great public park for all time to come,...?[11]

Both the western press, most notably the Helena Herald of Helena, Montana, and eastern papers, such as the Washington Star and the New York Times, reported on the expeditions and the passage of the legislation.[12]

The natural wonders of the American West had been reported by explorers for many years. However, it was not until after the Civil War that most of the systematic exploration occurred. Although the Yellowstone region was visited by explorers at least as early as 1829,[13] it was not until 1869 that the first "definitely intended exploration" occurred.[14]

The Folsom-Cook expedition of 1869 was unofficial. It has no artists and no photographers. The only accounts were written and oral. Appearing in the July 1870 issue of Western

Monthly was an article, probably by Folsom, which described the beauty of the region, expressed fear that the public would soon overrun the area, and commented upon the problem of being believed.[15]

> The country around the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, although frequently visited by prospectors and mountain men, is still to the world of letters a veritable terra incognita... Owing to the fact that this class of men had gained a reputation for indulging in flights of fancy when recounting their adventures, these reports of waterfalls, hot springs and volcanoes were received with considerable incredulity, until it was noticed that, however much the accounts of different parties differed in detail, there was a marked coincidence in the descriptions of some of the most prominent features of the country. (emphasis added) [16]

This comment, part of one of the earliest published descriptive articles on the Yellowstone region, placed into the public record the fact that the sheer repetitive nature of the "tall tales" had resulted in many people beginning to believe the descriptions. Failure to take this point into account when claiming that the photographs of Jackson made the "tall tales" believable, is an important omission.

The following year the Washburn expedition took place. This, too, was a private and unofficial expedition, but it included "some of the most influential citizens and officials of the [Montana] Territory."[17]

General Henry D. Washburn was the surveyor general of Montana. He had been given the rank of major general for services rendered during the Civil War and had served two terms as a United States Congressman. Cornelius Hedges was a judge and member of the Montana Bar. Samuel Hauser was a civil

engineer and prominent banker in Helena, Montana. Walter Trumbull, an assistant assessor of the internal revenue, was the son of Lyman Trumbull, a United States Senator from Illinois. Truman C. Everts was the assessor of internal revenue for Montana. Nathaniel P. Langford had been the collector of internal revenue for Montana. And Warren C. Gillette and Benjamin Stuckney were merchants from Montana.[18]

Because of the presence of so many influential persons a military escort was granted. The head of the military contingent was Lt. G. C. Doane. His account of the expedition represents the first major official government report on the Yellowstone region. Professor Hayden refers to it in his preliminary report on the official 1871 expedition. He commented "that for graphic descriptions and thrilling interest it has not been surpassed by any official report made to our government since the time of Lewis and Clark."[19]

Several of the people on the Washburn expedition played a role in lobbying for the passage of the Yellowstone legislation. The most prominent was N. P. Langford who, in addition to writing his article, "The Wonders of Yellowstone," for Scribner's Monthly, toured the country lecturing on the wonders of Yellowstone.[20] After the passage of the legislation he was appointed the first superintendent of the park.

Truman C. Everts became lost. After several days, other expedition members stopped searching for Everts, fearing that he had perished. Everts was found by a search party that was

sent out after the expedition had returned. He wrote "Thirty-seven Days of Peril" which described his terrifying ordeal, for the November 1871 edition of Scribner's Monthly.[21]

Cornelius Hedges wrote a series of articles for the Helena Herald. Evidently his accounts of the expedition "attracted wide interest in the country and were immediately copied generally by the press..."[22]

Just as "the information secured from Folsom led to the Washburn exploring expedition in August 1870,"[23] the results of the Washburn expedition most likely led to the sanctioning of the official government survey of 1871.

An article appearing in the November 14, 1870, Helena Herald claims that:

> The wonderful discoveries reported by General Washburn ...are likely and almost certain to lead to an early and thorough exploration of those mysterious regions under the patronage of the general Government and of the Smithsonian Institute and other prominent institutions of this country. I think this will be sure to take place next season.[24]

The earliest reference to the Yellowstone region listed in the New York Times Index is a report dated January 22, 1871 on N. P. Langford's lecture. Langford discussed his experiences as a member of the Washburn expedition. The article reports the lecture at Cooper Institute the preceding evening in a matter-of-fact manner.

> In Montana County, Nature, he said, displays her wonderful beauties in a magnificent manner, and it is inhabited only by wild beasts, Indians and a few trappers.[25]

There is not any indication to lead a reader to believe the New York Times doubted the general veracity of Langford's

report. However, when the New York Times coverage of Yellowstone picks up again in September of 1871, referring to the Hayden survey, it does become apparent that the veracity of many of the Yellowstone accounts had been in question. The New York Times wanted more evidence, yet there is no indication that what it desired as evidence was photographs. Rather the New York Times awaited the reports of trained scientists.

> Hitherto the reports that have reached us, have been mainly those of popular as distinguished from scientific observers. Those now to be furnished, on the other hand, we have a right to anticipate will be trustworthy, exact, and comprehensive, and will thus supply much needed information of one of the most wonderful tracts of the American continent.[26]

On October 23, 1871 the New York Times again wrote about "The New Wonder Land." Here one finds reiterated the New York Times reluctance to fully believe earlier reports, including the report of Lt. Doane. The New York Times wanted "confirmatory testimony" and argued that;

> ...the offical narrative of the Hayden expedition must be deemed needful before we can altogether accept stories of wonder hardly short of fairy tales in the astounding phenomena they describe.[27]

The article concludes with a statement attesting that the New York Times had been convinced by the evidence that the descriptions of the explorers were accurate, at least in general.

> We have heard enough now to be satisfied that the region in question must be among the most wonderful of this wonderful central continent of ours, and to suspect that it deserves, in this wise, absolute preeminence, Prof. Hayden's official report, which, we hope, will not be long delayed, will enable us to arrive at conclusions more positive.[28]

They did await specific details not available until the publication of Hayden's final report. They had been convinced on the basis of the written descriptions of a Hayden survey artist, Henry W. Elliott. The article relied upon a letter Elliott sent to Professor Henry, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

Two days after the bill passed the House an article appeared in the New York Times applauding the action. Although it is possible that the reporter(s) who worked on this article and the previous ones may have seen Jackson's photographs, it is clear that no reference was made to them.[29] The New York Times belief in the beauty of the Yellowstone region seems to have had nothing to do with his photographs.

The accounts of the various expeditions and the descriptions of Yellowstone which appeared in magazines and newspapers demonstrate that there was public interest in the exploration of the Yellowstone region before the Hayden survey and before Jackson made his photographs. However, the Hayden survey did provide the final bits of scientific evidence needed to convince skeptics that the descriptions of the breathtaking nature of the Yellowstone region were fact not fiction.

Upon the conclusion of the survey, Hayden and some members of his group joined the lobbying effort already underway to have the Yellowstone region reserved to the people. The photographs of William Henry Jackson became a part of that lobbying effort.

A search of The Congressional Globe reveals that in the Senate reference to or action on the Yellowstone legislation was made on December 18, 1871, January 22, 23 and 30, February 27, 29 and March 5, 1872; and in the House on January 30, February 27, 28, 1872.

Senator Pomeroy on December 18, 1871 introduced "a bill to set apart a certain tract of land lying near the headwaters of

the Yellowstone as a public park."[30] He made no specific mention of Jackson's photographs, but did say, "Professor Haydon has made a very elaborate report on the subject."[31] "By unanimous consent, leave was granted to introduce a bill (S.No. 392)" and it was "referred to the Committee on Public Lands."[32]

The record is clear that after the Committee on Public Lands had decided to report back to the Senate, Senator Pomeroy twice tried and failed to gain its consideration. It was on the third attempt on January 30, 1872 that the measure was voted upon.

The record is also clear that in so far as the comments of the Senators are reported in The Congressional Globe the photographs of William Henry Jackson are not of major concern.

Photographs in the Senate comments are mentioned only once. In the House comments they are not mentioned at all. The quotation Taft excised from Senator Pomeroy's comments comes from the end of a fairly lengthy statement by Pomeroy wherein he is explaining the reasons why the bill should be passed.

> MR. POMEROY. Yes, sir. There are no arable lands, no agricultural lands there. It is the highest elevation from which our springs descend, and as it cannot interfere with any settlement for legitimate agricultural purposes, it was thought that it ought to be set apart early for this purpose [a park]. We found when we set apart the Yosemite valley that there were one or two persons who had made claims there, and there has been a contest, and it has finally gone to the Supreme Court to decide whether persons who settle on unsurveyed lands have no rights as against the Government. The Court has held that settlers on unsurveyed lands have no rights as against the Government. The Government can make an appropriation of any unsurveyed lands, notwithstanding settlers may be upon them. As this region would be attractive only on account of preempting a hot spring or some valuable mineral, it was thought such claims had better be excluded from the bill.

> There are several Senators whose attention has been called to this matter, and there are photographs of the valley and the curiosities, which Senators can see. (emphasis added) The only object of the bill is to take early possession of it by the United States and set it apart, so that it cannot be included in any claim or occupied by any settlers.[33]

When examined in the more complete context it is difficult to believe that Pomeroy was presenting a strong case for the influential character of Jackson's photographs. In a somewhat casual manner the remark suggests that verification of the claims as to the lack of arable lands, the presence of hot springs, etc., may be obtained in photographs "which Senators can see." In no place do the comments on the floor of the House or Senate suggest that Senators or Congressmen were either persuaded by Jackson's photographs or had actually seen them.

While the record shows one reference to photographs it reveals four references to the work of the geological survey team. In the Senate on December 18, 1871, when Senator Pomeroy first introduced the bill, he cited Professor Hayden's elaborate report on the subject."[34] On January 22, 1872, Senator Pomeroy commented: "Professor Hayden and party have been there, and this bill is drawn on the recommendation of that gentleman to consecrate for public uses this country for a public park."[35] On January 23, 1872, he again referred to the "exploration" by Professor Hayden.[36]

And in the House on February 27, 1872, one finds that Congressman Dawes remarked:

> ...we but interfere with what is represented as the exposure of that country to those who are attracted by the wonderful descriptions of it by the reports of the geologists...[37]

To put the importance of Jackson's photographs into perspective one must realize, as Jackson did himself, that the photographs represented but a part of the evidence Hayden was gathering. In fact Hayden's published report for the 1871 expedition includes no photographs. It includes many drawings of the scenery and of rock specimens, etc., but no photographs.[38]

Jackson wrote in Time Exposure, his autobiography, that:

> Pictures were essential to the fulfillment of the doctor's plan for publicizing this Survey; but the basic purpose was always exploration. I cannot be too careful in emphasizing the fact that in this [the 1871 expedition] and all the following expeditions I was seldom more than a sideshow in a great circus.[39]

Clearly, Jackson viewed his own role as supportive rather than as primary.

Taft implies from his reading of The Congressional Globe that somehow the lack of familiarity with the Yellowstone photographs was responsible for the two thwarted attempts at introducing the legislation. Nothing so sinister seems to have been the case. When the bill was reported out of committee on January 22, 1872 Senator Pomeroy asked for its immediate consideration. It appears that the objections to its consideration had mostly to do with the time element. The Vice President said:

> The Senator from Massachusetts and the Senator from Kentucky both gave way only for current morning business (emphasis added), but the Senator from Kansas now asks unanimous consent for the consideration of the bill which he has just reported.[40]

The following day Senator Pomeroy again tried to have the bill considered. This time extensive comments were made in connection with the bill by Senator Pomeroy, including the ones about photographs. Before he could get it acted upon

Senator Thurman was able to end the debate with the following comment:

> I object to the consideration of this bill in the morning hour. I am willing to take it up when we can attend to it, but not now.[41]

These comments can be interpreted in two ways. First, enough members of the Senate felt there was inadequate time to debate the bill before their noon recess. Second, there was substantial opposition to the bill on political grounds and these objections were polite, but effective, parliamentary delaying tactics.

Given the fact that the bill was first introduced in mid-December 1871 and finally passed the Senate on January 30, 1872 it would seem that the resistance to the legislation was not very strong, that perhaps lunch and not politics held the bill up. This analysis concurs with the conclusions of Louis C. Cramton, author of Early History of Yellowstone Park. Cramton commented:

> The speed with which the Yellowstone Park bill proceeded from introduction to enactment into law is surprising. It is true that it was not accompanied by any appropriation and was merely the reservation of lands already belonging to the Government. There were, however, projects pending at the same time involving the reservation or transfer of lands totaling about 100,000,000 acres, most of which projects failed. It was just after the Civil War, a period when economy in the National Government was urgent. Nevertheless the bill which was first introduced in Congress December 18, 1871, became law March 1, 1872, only about 10 weeks later.[42]

Jackson in his autobiography mentions that his photographs were needed for the lobbying effort, but does not describe how they were used. He, too, says that "The photographs...had

helped do a fine piece of work: without a dissenting vote, Congress established the Yellowstone as a national park..."[43]

If memories fade as time passes one should not fault Jackson for his imperfect memory. After all his own glory was tied to the perpetuation of the myth.

His son Clarence Jackson writing about the importance of his father's work described the lobbying process in the following manner:

> Each member of the House was visited personally by Langford, Hayden or Clagett; the Senators received the same flattering attention; the Secretary of the Interior was induced to give the bill his public approval. Specimens of the mineral wealth and the animal life of the region were displayed and explained. The trump card was held for last.
>
> At just the right moment, prints of the Jackson photographs were placed on the desks of all Senators and members of the House. Handsomely bound folio volumes of the photographs, neatly captioned, and bearing the name of the recipient in gold, were distributed among those perennial, shadowy gentlemen who were believed to have an "influence" beyond their immediate official position. It was these actual pictures of the wonders of the upper Yellowstone that clinched the vote in favor of the first National Park.[44]

One would suppose that if the Jackson photographs were used as a trump card during the period of January 23 to January 30, 1872 some mention of the photographs as a persuasive device would have found its way into some official record, or some news account of the time. So far this researcher has been unable to locate such an account.

Clarence Jackson's description of the lobbying process, although a bit overly dramatic, seems plausible. What does not is Clarence Jackson's conclusion. Even he acknowledges the

vast amount of other information presented to the Congressmen. Yet he is insistent upon the overriding importance of his father's work.

In Chittenden's complete text, while the documentary value of the photographs is acknowledged, the praise is within the context of their being but one type of evidence. The last sentence of Chittenden's paragraph from which sentence one in Taft's quote is taken reads:

> The report and collection of photographs and specimens by Dr. Hayden were therefore the principal results of this season's work, and they played a decisive part in the events of 1871-72.[45]

From Chittenden's perspective the photographs were but one of three importance elements in the official reports. They were not the decisive element as Taft claims. All three were interrelated.

This interrelationship is emphasized again in the second paragraph from which Taft excerpted material. A more contextual look at that paragraph reveals that the "<u>They</u>" Chittenden was referring to were the "photographs and specimens" not just the photographs. He wrote:

> [Hayden] was thoroughly familiar with the subject, and was equipped with an exhaustive collection of photographs and specimens collected the previous summer. These were placed on exhibition and were probably seen by all members of Congress. They did a work which no other agency could do, and doubtless convinced everyone who saw them that the region where such wonders existed should be carefully preserved to the people forever.[46]

Perhaps, but Chittenden, like Taft, Newhall and the younger Jackson, ascribes cause without demonstrable proof of cause.

Neither he, nor Taft, nor Newhall demonstrates which piece of evidence, if any, that members of Congress were exposed to convinced them to support the legislation.

A letter by William H. Clagett, the Congressman who introduced the Yellowstone legislation, shed some light on the exhibition question and its possible influence on the legislators.

> When [Professor Hayden] returned to Washington in 1871, he brought with him a large number of specimens from different parts of the Park, which were on exhibition in one of the rooms of the Capitol or in the Smithsonian Institute (one or the other), while Congress was in session, and he rendered valuable services in exhibiting those specimens and explaining the geological and other features of the proposed Park...[47]

From what Clagett stated it does not seem reasonable to conclude that because there was an exhibition all the members of Congress saw it. The evidence seems to be lacking to support this notion. The fact that all members may have had an opportunity to see the exhibition or may even have been presented with personal copies of the photographs does not mean that they all, or even a majority did in fact see them and more importantly were in fact persuaded by them to vote for the legislation.

With the exception of passing reference to their existence in official government documents mention is not made of Jackson's photographs in printed accounts written at the time. Rather, drawings and paintings are mentioned and reproduced in more than one source.

In terms of a persuasive device the only mention of visual material found by the researcher is to drawings and paintings made by Private Charles Moore and Walter Trumbull of the Washburn

expedition of 1870[48] and by Thomas Moran and Henry W. Elliott of the Hayden expedition of 1871.[49]

Walter Trumbull was the son of Senator Trumbull,[50] one of the Senators who figured prominently in the passage of the Yellowstone legislation. Just before the bill was voted upon in the Senate, Senator Trumbull remarked:

> Here is a region of country away up in the Rocky Mountains, where there are the most wonderful geysers on the face of the earth...
>
> Now, before there is any dispute as to this wonderful country; I hope we shall excerpt it from the general disposition of the public lands, and reserve it to the government.[51]

In the House one of the bill's principal proponents was Congressman Dawes, whose son, Chester M. Dawes, was one of the assistants on the Hayden expedition of 1871.[52]

Perhaps the passage of the legislation was due more to the influence these two gentlemen exerted upon their colleagues than to any of the geological evidence. At least one historian thinks this is partially so. Louis Cramton wrote:

> ...Dawes was one of the greatest powers in the House of Representatives. The speed with which the bill became law after it was introduced is in part to be explained by this.[53]

It does not seem likely that the bill passed only because of their interest. Yet one must not minimize the important role these two men played, perhaps based more on family considerations than upon persuasive photographic or geological evidence.

When Taft claims that the legislation "passed without dissent," he is inaccurate. It was passed in the Senate

without a vote count being recorded. The vote was probably a voice vote, and consequently Taft interprets this to mean there was no dissent. Whether there in fact was little or no dissent in the Senate, the dissent in the House was duly noted in The Congressional Globe. Although the legislation passed by a significant margin, it is hard to argue that a vote of 115 yeas, 65 nays and 60 not voting represents unanimous endorsement.

Taft does not say that the House passed the bill without dissent. He does not mention the House vote at all. His writing, however, clearly leaves the impression that whatever opposition to the final passage may have existed evaporated because the photographs had been seen and had been persuasive.

More than any other linkage it was the one by Taft of the photographs to the unanimity of support for the legislation which Newhall and the others relied upon when they argued that William Henry Jackson's photographs of the Yellowstone region played a decisive role in shaping national policy. The record shows that support was not unanimous, as Taft implied. And the record does not support the argument that the photographs were the principal causative agent in the persuasion process.

All who have seen Jackson's photographs of the Yellowstone region would agree that the photographs present a natural wonderland magnificently observed by a gifted photographer. The photographs did offer proof of the existence of "Old Faithful." No one who has seen these photographs would argue that the splendor of Yellowstone was merely a delusion of grandeur shared by those explorers who fell victim to its spell.

While it is clear that William Henry Jackson's photographs were part of the scientific data available to Congressmen there is little evidence to indicate that the photographs influenced the legislators more than any of the other bits of information presented to them. The contention that Jackson's photographs played the primary role in the shaping of national policy is dubious. There were many factors involved in the persuasion process. No one factor can be shown to be the principal causative agent. This finding, by calling into question the influence of Jackson's work, suggests that other instances where photographs have been assumed to have played a key role in the shaping of national policy need to be re-examined, too.

Notes

1. Robert Lassam, Fox Talbot Photographer (Wiltshire, England, Compton Press, 1979), p. 13.

2. William H. Jackson, Descriptive Catalogue of North American Indians: Miscellaneous Publications, No. 9, (Washington, Department of the Interior, 1877), p.v. This volume was reprinted in 1978 by R.M. Weatherford Books, Columbus, Ohio.

3. Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present Day, Fourth revised and expanded edition (New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1964), pp. 137-138.

4. Gail Buckland, Reality Recorded: Early Documentary Photography (Greenwich, Connecticut, New York Graphic Society, 1974), p. 40.

5. Barbara London Upton and John Upton, Photography, Second edition (Boston, Little, Brown and Co., Inc., 1981), p.332.

6. George Craven, Object and Image (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 44.

7. Peter Pollack, The Picture History of Photography (New York, Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1977), p. 63.

8. Robert Taft, Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889 (New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1964), pp. 300, 302. This edition is a re-publication of the work first published in 1938 by Macmillan Company.

9. Ibid., p. 302.

10. Hiram Martin Chittenden, The Yellowstone National Park, ed. Richard A. Bartlett (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 82. This is a reprint of Chittenden's work which originally appeared in 1895. The edition Taft consulted was one published in 1917.

11. Ferdinand V. Hayden, "The Wonders of the West--II: More About the Yellowstone," Scribner's Monthly, Volume III, No. 4, February 1872, p. 396.

12. Many of the articles in the Helena Herald as well as one from the New York Times are reprinted in:
Louis C. Cramton, Early History of Yellowstone National Park and Its Relation to National Park Policies (Washington, United States Department of the Interior, 1932).
This volume also has a bibliography which is indispensible for helping to locate obscure references.

13. Ibid., p. 6. Cramton wrote:
Joseph Meek visited this region in 1829. James Bridges, the noted hunter and scout, is clearly shown to have visited the region at various times from 1830 on . . .

14. Ibid., p. 11.

15. This article, titled "The Valley of the Upper Yellowstone by C.W. Cook" is reprinted in Cramton's book, pp. 83-89. Cramton argues, however, that the author really was Folsom, not Cook. He states on page 11:

> "Every reference to the article, except the signature in the Western Monthly, speaks of it as having been written by Folsom, and Director Albright informs me that Mr. Cook told him that the article was written by Folsom."

16. Ibid., p. 83.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Nathaniel Pitt Langford, Diary of the Washburn Expedition to the Yellowstone and Firehole Rivers in the Year 1870 Copyright 1905, p. XVI. This volume was privately printed.

19. Cramton, Ibid., p. 14.

20. This lecture tour was referred to by Cramton and was reported on in the New York Times, Sunday, January 22, 1871, p. 8.

21. Truman C. Everts, "Thirty-seven Days of Peril," Scribner's Monthly, Vol. III, No. 1, November 1871, pp. 1-17.

22. Cramton, p. 16.
Evidently the articles in the Helena Herald were picked up and carried in many papers. Cramton quotes an editorial from the Helena Herald on October 1, 1870.

> Our exchanges, East and West, are just now reaching us, containing copious extracts from the Herald's Yellowstone reports... The Herald is everywhere complimented for... those excellent and reliable reports...(Cramton, p. 17).

23. Ibid., p. 10.

24. Ibid., p. 17.

25. New York Times, Sunday, January 22, 1871, p. 8.

26. New York Times, Monday, September 18, 1871, p. 4.

27. New York Times, Monday, October 23, 1871, p. 4.

28. Ibid.

29. New York Times, February 29, 1872, p. 4.

30. The Congressional Globe, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, U.S. Senate, December 18, 1871, p. 159.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., January 23, 1872, p. 520.

34. Ibid., December 18, 1871, p. 159.

35. Ibid., January 22, 1872, p. 484.

36. Ibid., January 23, 1872, p. 520.

37. Ibid., House, February 27, 1872, p. 1243.

38. F.V. Hayden, United States Geologist, Preliminary Report of the United States Geological Survey of Montana and Portions of Adjacent Territories; Being A Fifth Annual Report of Progress (Washington, Government Printing Office 1872).

39. William Henry Jackson, Time Exposure: The Autobiography of William Henry Jackson (New York, Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 201. This book was originally published in 1940 by G.P. Putnam's Sons.

40. The Congressional Globe, Senate, January 22, 1872, p. 484.

41. Ibid., January 23, 1872.

42. Cramton, p. 24.

43. Jackson, p. 205.

44. Clarence S. Jackson, Picture Maker of the Old West William H. Jackson (New York, Scribner's 1971), p. 145. This book was originally published in 1947.

45. Chittenden, p. 76.

46. Ibid., p. 82.

47. This letter appears in the introduction to Nathaniel Pitt Langford, Diary of the Washburn Expedition to the Yellowstone and Firehole Rivers in the Year 1870 (Nathaniel Pitt Langford, 1905), p. xxii. This volume seems to have been privately printed. A copy is in the Michigan State University Library, F/722/.L28.

48. Ibid., a collection of these drawings can be found in the Appendix. Cramton also refers to these drawings on p. 13.

49. Langford wrote about the power and beauty of Moran's painting in his first report as Superintendent of Yellowstone Park to the Secretary of the Interior early in 1873. (See Senate Executive Document #35, 42nd Congress, 3rd Session.)

Hayden, in an essay which accompanied a commercially produced portfolio of Moran's Yellowstone water-colors, made comments indicating his belief in the descriptive superiority of Moran's work to any photographs. In adopting this attitude he was presenting the belief that photographs were less adequate than paintings because they lacked color. Perhaps it is this reason why public comments, made at the time on the drawings and paintings, are more prevalent and detailed than any which refer to Jackson's photographs.

The essay is in:
The Yellowstone National Park, and the Mountain Regions of Portions of Idaho, Nevada, Colorado and Utah, described by Professor F.V. Hayden, Geologist-in-charge of The United States Government Exploring Expeditions to The Yellowstone Valley, and of The United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, illustrated by Chromolithographic Reproductions of Water-Color Sketches by Thomas Moran, Artist to the Expedition of 1871 (Boston, L. Prang and Company, 1876).

50. Cramton, p. 25.

51. The Congressional Globe, Senate, January 30, 1872, p. 677.

52. It is not 100 percent certain that Chester M. Dawes was the son of Representative Dawes, but it seems probable. Cramton cites William Henry Jackson as the source for linking Chester and Henry Dawes. On page 32 in Cramton one finds:

If Mr. Jackson is correct, that the Dawes who was a member of the Hayden party was a son of Congressman Dawes, it is clear that the Dawes contact on the Yellowstone project continued to be very close.

53. Ibid., p. 32.